

Message Text

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20

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01

CU-04 AID-20 DRC-01 /137 W
----- 014766

R 241550Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6316

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 1003

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, DM, FR

SUBJECT: EXPULSION OF FRENCH CULTURAL CENTER DIRECTOR

1. FRENCH CULTURAL CENTER DIRECTOR IN COTONOU, CHRISTIAN HURLOT, WAS EXPELLED FROM DAHOMEY LATE JUNE 21. DCM AT FRENCH EMBASSY TOLD ME JUNE 22 THAT MRGD HAD NOT YET GIVEN OFFICIAL REASON FOR DEPORTATION. HOWEVER, HE BELIEVES THAT CAUSE WAS ASSOCIATED WITH HURLOT'S ACTIVITIES AS AN AMATEUR PILOT, AND DAHOMEAN SUPER SENSITIVITY TO AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY.

2. HURLOT HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN TWO RECENT INCIDENTS IN WHICH PASSENGERS FLYING WITH HIM WERE APPREHENDED CARRYING CAMERAS BY DAHOMEAN AIRPORT POLICE. BOTH CASES WERE OBVIOUSLY INNOCENT TOURIST FLIGHTS; THE LATEST INVOLVING AMERICAN CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICE DIRECTOR REV. ROGER BISSON OCCURRED SOME THREE WEEKS AGO. AS FAR AS WE ARE AWARE, NONE OF THE PASSENGERS HAVE BEEN TROUBLED BY AUTHORITIES ASIDE FROM ORIGINAL APPREHENSION AT AIRPORT WHERE THEY WERE INTERROGATED BY POLICE. FATHER BISSON WAS TOLD AT THAT TIME BY COMMISSAIRE OF POLICE
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THAT HIS BEING CATHOLIC PRIEST HAD SAVED HIM FROM FURTHER DIFFI-

CULTIES. HIS BEING AMCIT ADMINISTERING PL-480 PROGRAM
PROBABLY ALSO FACTOR IN HIS RELATIVELY GENTLE TREATMENT.

3. HURLOT DID NOT HAVE DIPLOMATIC STATUS. THUS, DAHOMEANS
APPARENTLY FELT THEY COULD DEPORT HIM AS UNDESIRABLE ALIEN.
FRENCH AMBASSADOR HAS ASKED FOR EXPLANATION OF MRGD HEAVY-
HANDED ACTION. OFFICIAL FRENCH REACTION, IF THERE IS TO BE
ANY, WILL BE TAKEN AFTER MRGD EXPLANATION RECEIVED.

4. IN WHAT MAY HAVE BEEN ATTEMPT DEMONSTRATE ACTION TAKEN
AGAINST HURLOT WAS NOT MEANT AS ANTI-FRENCH GESTURE, FIVE
MEMBERS OF MRGD ATTENDED PARTY ON JUNE 22 IN HONOR OF
DEPARTURE OF GROUP OF FRENCH MILITARY ADVISORS. ALSO,
PICTURE OF PRESIDENT PRESENTING MEDAL TO DEPARTING SENIOR
ADVISOR WAS CARRIED ON FRONT PAGE OF JUNE 24 DAHO-EXPRESS.

5. EMBASSY IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH FATHER BISSON AND WILL
INTERVENE VIGOROUSLY SHOULD HE BE FURTHER TROUBLED.
MCNAMARA

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NNN

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